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ELN
Page: 1

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 09350 01 OF 02 212150Z
ACTION ARA-00

INFO	LOG-00	ADS-00	INR-07	SS-00	H-01	NSCE-00	NSAE-00
	HA-09	L-03	LAB-04	TRSE-00	PM-10	PA-01	OMB-01
	SIL-01	INRE-00	USIE-00	SP-02	SNP-01	PRS-01	DS-01
	SCT-02	P-02	T-01	/047 W			

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P 212128Z JUN 89
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6485
INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
USINT HAVANA
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 09350

SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PTER, PINS, ELAB, PGOV, EPET, CO
SUBJECT: MILITARY OFFENSIVE, ELN TERRORISM AND THE WAR
OF WORDS CONTINUE

REF: (A) BOGOTA 9173 (B) DAO REPORT (SEPTEL)

SUMMARY

1. (C) WHILE THE MILITARY CONTINUES ITS OFFENSIVE IN SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS AGAINST THE ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION (ELN), THE ELN HAS AGAIN ATTACKED THE OIL PIPELINE. THE MEDIA HAS ROUNDLY CONDEMNED THE ELN FOR
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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 09350 01 OF 02 212150Z

THESE ONGOING ATTACKS AND HAS NOW BEEN JOINED BY THE LEFTIST PATRIOTIC UNION (UP) PARTY, IN CONCERT WITH ITS PARENT FARC GUERRILLA GROUP, IN CENSURING THE ELN.

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J. OLSON
DATE/CASE ID: 30 OCT 2002 200201334

UNCLASSIFIED

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Page: 2
Channel: n/a

PRESIDENT OF ECOPETROL (PARA-STATAL OIL COMPANY) ANDRES RESTREPO CRITICIZED THE OIL WORKERS UNION, USO, FOR FAILING TO CONDEMN FORCEFULLY THE ELN PIPELINE ATTACKS (USO IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE CONTROLLED BY THE ELN). FINALLY, THE MARINE BASE COMMANDER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SECURITY OF COVENAS OIL TERMINAL WAS RELIEVED OF HIS COMMAND.

MILITARY CONTINUES OFFENSIVE ...

2. (LOU) THE MILITARY CONTINUES ITS OFFENSIVE IN SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS AGAINST THE SELF-NAMED ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION (ELN). WHILE MEDIA REPORTS ARE CONFLICTING, IT APPEARS THAT MILITARY UNITS HAVE HIT AT LEAST TWO ELN CAMPS, DISMANTLED THE GUERRILLA GROUP'S URBAN NETWORK IN THE NORTHERN CITY OF VALLEDUPAR, CESAR DEPARTMENT, KILLED AT LEAST EIGHT GUERRILLAS AND CAPTURED SIX DURING THE PAST FIVE DAYS (REF B REPORTS HIGHER CASUALTIES). ONE OF THE CAMPS, NEAR TIBU, SANTANDER DEPARTMENT, MAY BE "NEW COLOMBIA," THE ELN'S HEADQUARTERS. IT WAS DESCRIBED BY AN ON THE SPOT CORRESPONDENT FROM LEADING DAILY "EL TIEMPO" AS A SOPHISTICATED CAMP SURROUNDED BY BOOBY-TRAPPED DITCHES AND LAND MINES. THE MILITARY IS CONCENTRATING ITS OFFENSIVE IN MAGDALENA MEDIO, SAN VICENTE DE CHUCURI, SANTANDER, AND THE SANTANDER-ARAUCA BORDER REGION, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS.

... WHILE ELN CONTINUES PIPELINE ATTACKS

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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 09350 01 OF 02 212150Z

3. (C) MEANWHILE, THE ELN ATTACKED THE CANO-LIMON PIPELINE YET AGAIN, MARKING ITS THIRD STRIKE AGAINST THE PIPELINE SINCE ITS MAJOR ATTACK ON THE COVENAS TERMINAL ON JUNE 16 (REF). THE ATTACKS ARE INTENDED TO DIVERT THE MILITARY FROM ITS CURRENT OPERATION, ACCORDING TO ARMY SOURCES AS QUOTED IN "EL TIEMPO." IN ADDITION THE GUERRILLA GROUP RELEASED A STATEMENT ON JUNE 13 LABELING AS "MILITARY TARGETS" ALL FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES. THE DECLARATION SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED OCCIDENTAL, EXXON, TEXAS, OPON DEVELOPMENT (AS RECEIVED) AND BRAZIL'S PETROBRAS. (NOTE; OXY SOURCES SAY THAT DESPITE THE REPORT, OXY DOES NOT/NOT INTEND TO REMOVE FOREIGN WORKERS OR DEPENDENTS AT THIS TIME.)

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED

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Page: 3
Channel: n/a

UP AND ECOPETROL SEPARATELY CONDEMN ELN TERRORISM

4. (C) IN AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ELN ON JUN- 20, THE LEFTIST PATRIOTIC UNION (UP) PARTY CALLED ON THE GUERRILLA ORGANIZATION TO CEASE ITS ATTACKS ON THE COUNTRY'S OIL INFRASTRUCTURE. THE LETTER SAID THAT THE SOLUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS WERE POLITICAL, NOT MILITARY. IT ASKED HOW THE ELN COULD BELIEVE THAT IT WAS DEFENDING THE NATION'S OIL RESERVES THROUGH TERRORIST ATTACKS THAT WASTE OIL AND DAMAGE THE ENVIRONMENT. THE UP HAD ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK THAT SUCH A LETTER WOULD BE ISSUED. (COMMENT: LAST WEEK THE FARC MADE A SIMILAR THOUGH LESS PROMINENT CALL ON THE ELN TO STOP KIDNAPPING MAYORS AND BOMBING THE PIPELINE. THIS LETTER CAN BE SEEN AS PART OF A FARC/UP EFFORT TO PRESSURE THE ELN TO GET IN LINE WITH THE FARC STRATEGY FOR PRESSURING THE GOC INTO A PEACE DIALOGUE.)

5. (C) PRESIDENT OF ECOPETROL (PARA-STATAL OIL COMPANY)

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 09350 02 OF 02 212150Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BOGOTA 09350

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 3

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL
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Page: 4
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SUBJECT: MILITARY OFFENSIVE, ELN TERRORISM AND THE WAR
ANDRES RESTREPO KEPT UP THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SIDE OF THE
BATTLE, SAYING THAT "THE PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO FEEL
THE WICKEDNESS OF THESE ATTACKS." HE DENOUNCED THE
UNION (USO) THAT REPRESENTS ECOPETROL WORKERS FOR NOT
CONDEMNING ELN ATTACKS ON THE PIPELINE. (NOTE: USO IS
GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE CONTROLLED BY THE ELN.) USO
NATIONAL PRESIDENT CESAR CARRILLO RETORTED THAT THE
UNION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ELN. BOGOTA USO
PRESIDENT FERNANDO RAMIREZ WENT FURTHER, SAYING THAT IF
USO'S STATEMENTS ON THE ELN WERE WEAK, ECOPETROL'S
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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 09350 02 OF 02 212150Z

FAILURE TO CONDEMN THE DIRTY WAR AND ASSASSINATIONS OF
OIL WORKERS WAS COMPLICITOUS. RESTREPO ALSO CHARGED
THAT THE ELN HAD INFILTRATED ECOPETROL'S ADMINISTRATION,
ALLOWING THE GUERRILLAS TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE WHICH
HELPED MAKE THE COVENAS TERMINAL ATTACK A SUCCESS. THE
ELN ATTACKS WILL LEAD TO A CUT-BACK IN HIRING BY
ECOPETROL AND THE CANCELLATION OF CONTRACTS WITH THIRD
COMPANIES, ACCORDING TO RESTREPO. OIL PRODUCTION HAS
DECREASED BY FIFTY PERCENT, HE SAID.

COVENAS BASE COMMANDER RELIEVED

6. (U) FINALLY, THE MARINE BASE COMMANDER RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE SECURITY OF COVENAS OIL TERMINAL, COLONEL
ALFONSO FRANCO BEDOYA, WAS RELIEVED OF HIS COMMAND. HE
IMMEDIATELY WENT PUBLIC, CLAIMING THAT THE SECURITY
FAILURE AT THE COVENAS TERMINAL WAS ECOPETROL'S
RESPONSIBILITY, NOT HIS. ECOPETROL JEALOUSLY KEPT
SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS UNDER ITS OWN CONTROL, HE SAID;
ONLY TWO SOLDIERS WERE ASSIGNED TO GUARD THE ENTRANCE TO
THE TERMINAL BASED UPON AN ECOPETROL-COLOMBIAN NAVY
AGREEMENT. PRESIDENT BARCO SAID THAT THE GOC WOULD
INVESTIGATE ALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATED WITH THE COVENAS
TERMINAL'S DEFENSE AND SEVERELY PUNISH THOSE RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE SECURITY FAILURE.

COMMENT

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 4

UNCLASSIFIED

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Document Number: 1989BOGOTA09350

Page: 5
Channel: n/a

7. (C) THE UP CRITICISM HAS MADE CONDEMNATION OF THE ELN VIRTUALLY UNANOMOUS. THUS FAR, HOWEVER, THE GROUP'S LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN IMPERVIOUS TO CRITICISM. THE ELN'S ATTACK ON THE PIPELINE IN HUILA DEPARTMENT (REF) ADDS CREDENCE TO THE IDEA THAT THE GUERRILLAS ARE SPREADING
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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 09350 02 OF 02 212150Z

OUT THEIR OPERATIONS IN ORDER TO DIVERT THE ARMY FROM CONCENTRATING ON KEY ELN INFESTED AREAS. IT MARKED THE SECOND TIME THE ELN HAD BOMBED THE PIPELINE IN HUILA, A DEPARTMENT OUTSIDE OF THE MILITARY'S CURRENT OFFENSIVE.
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Page: 5

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